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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It's been anything but quiet this past week! Isn't amazing that the California-informed voted in Davis as governor, and now want him out. Why did they put him in office? He was good enough to elect in the first place, wasn't he? So now, if the recall vote occurs, I hope these same "well-informed" people get what they really deserve. Arnold's money will likely get him elected.

And what about this weather?! Amazing. Two weeks of hot, humid weather with a mixture of horrendous thunderstorms thrown in! I managed to mow my lawn last weekend, but the grass is still unusually high. Not that I'm complaining about the fact that my lawn is still a luscious green! The thunderstorms haven been wild! I experienced one driving home from work on Wednesday. When we set out from work, my wife and I noticed that the winds were high and the sky was rapidly getting dark. We usually take a few back roads before getting on the main street. As soon as me made the turn onto the main drag, the skies opened up. I mean the rain was coming down in sheets of water! Streets were flooding right in front of our eyes. The visibility was horrible; we were following taillights rather than the road. At one point, something other than rain was hitting the windshield. We thought that the might be a truck in front of us that had small debris being blown back at us. Then it got faster and harder, and we realized that were were being pelted by marble-sized hail! We finally made it home, through the myriad of miniature lakes along the way. Naturally, the dogs had to go out after being cooped-up for nine hours! I took a catnap and when I woke up, the sun was shining brightly! Typical New England weather!

Anyway, on Thursday the humidity started to wane, although the temperatures rose. No rain, though. Maybe this pattern of constant moisture in one form or another has finally left us for the present, and we may get a few nice days. Maybe.

And how about Thursday's huge blackout in the northeast corner of the country! I just can't imagine what it was like for those people in those major metropolitan cities trying to get home from work during rush hour! It's amazing what happens when something that we highly depend upon and we take for granted is lost.

Well, enough of this local weather and national events for the week! Let's move on to the news in this week's issue.

Until next time...

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HighWire 0.1.4 Is Released

Hi all,

Once again it is time for a new HighWire release. This time the code has had many vital additions and changes, some of which you'll notice right away but also some not so obvious. Above all, the implementation of online document caching means a very important step has been taken, as many upcoming additions will rely on it working. One example that is already working, is the ability to download and replay (via external players) embedded sounds from remote.

There have of course been a number of bugfixes made since last release, and some of the most important issues solved are:

* Downloader schedulers bug cured (job queue sometimes got messed up)
* History function bug cured (got messed up if a subframe document was located on another server than the frameset document)
* One table bug resolved (table cells would overlap other objects on page)

Finally some cosmetical issues that are new with 0.1.4 release, some of them making HighWire looking slightly similar to a real browser ;)

* Toolbar icon OPEN added (select local file to load and view)
* Toolbar icon STOP added, (cancel loading of the current page. ESC key does the same) * Ability to set the default background colour, in case such is not decided in BODY-tag

Do download and test this release! Future development will surely benefit from your feedback!

NOTE: Please make sure to carefully check out the example highwire configuration file for details on how to setup the cache as well as the default background colour.

/HighWire development team

http://highwire.atari-users.net

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, I've got some bad news for you... as I write this, a major portion of the northeastern north america is without power. My state (Connecticut) seems to be the eastern-most point for the outage, and as of this writing, they're not exactly sure of what happened. Of course, my news server is down, so I can't grab messages from the UseNet for this column. Don't it just figure?

But instead of just saying "sorry folks", I'm going to ramble a bit about what's going on and make an observation or two.

I've heard isolated reports that a power station either in northern New York or just over the border in Canada was struck by lightning, or that there was some sort of switching station malfunctioned... but right now that's all conjecture.

I've got to say that I'm uniformly impressed with the reports that have been coming out of New York City so far. The people caught by the power outage in mid-commute have, by most accounts, pulled together to get through the difficulties. News cameras captured average citizens pitching in to direct traffic since the electrically powered traffic lights were out, groups of THOUSANDS of stranded commuters standing patiently (or, at least in an orderly fashion) while waiting for a ferry since the subways were non-operational, and complete and total strangers helping whoever happened to need help.

Not quite what we've come to expect from New Yorkers, is it? Well, actually, these people DO remind me of New Yorkers... the New Yorkers of forty or fifty years ago when Brooklyn and the Bronx were really and truly neighborhoods. Heh heh, can't you just hear the words and music in the background?...

> "Boy the way Glenn Miller played.
> Songs that made the hit parade.
> Guys like us, we had it made.
> Those were the days."

Sorry, I couldn't resist.

Yeah, yeah, I know, that was Queens, but hey, it's ALL New York, right? Actually, I'm very tempted to say that they're just average Americans, but WHAT is an average american? A line from a movie just came to mind... "Two hundred and thirty million completely miserable people who don't agree on anything except that they want more and want it for less."

Well, that pretty much makes Americans average... well, average people. But it's more than that too. I think it's a question of perception. We don't expect New Yorkers to stop to help someone else.

I grew up around a lot of people who themselves grew up in New York (mostly Brooklyn and the Bronx), and the one thing they all say is that, in their day, the neighborhood was a safe haven... a place where, if you skipped school and the neighbor at the end of the block saw you, you could be sure that your parents would hear about it. It was a place where everyone had one thing in common... they were all different. It was, if not a struggle (although it usually was), at least a challenge to make a living. One long-time New York resident explained it to me like this: "It didn't matter that you worked hard and didn't make a lot of money. Everybody worked hard, and nobody made a lot of money. We all knew that

the guy next door was in the same boat... even if he had a different accent or what-have-you."

I think we've forgotten that we're all in the same boat. We've got all kinds of things that we like to use to set ourselves apart from one another these days. Money, education, politics, and even the "digital divide"... the old "haves and have-nots" thing. We've forgotten that underneath all the different labels, behind the accents, and through everything else that makes us seem different, we're still residents of a neighborhood... a big, strange neighborhood to be sure, but a neighborhood none-the-less.

Meanwhile, while we're dealing with the power outage, much of europe is suffering through the worst heat wave in a long time. There could be as many as 3,000 people dead or dying from heat-related problems in France. I haven't heard much about any other places in europe, but I know that the heat is not limited to just France.

Isn't there any place on earth these days that DOESN'T have some big problems? Well, maybe an island or two in the Aleutians or something... oops... they just discovered a new under-water volcano in the Aleutian Island chain. Oh well. I guess that we're still all in the same boat. I just wish that smart-alec would stop rockin' the boat!

Well, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - ATI Gets Next-Gen Xbox Deal!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Sony To Lauch Online Sports!
Microsoft Gets High Heat!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Sony to Launch Service for Online Sports Games

Sony Corp., which dominates the video game hardware market with PlayStation 2 but has seen its share of the sports game market dwindle in the face of heavy competition, on Monday said it would launch a service for its sports game players to compete online.

The new 989SportsOnline.com is set to launch Aug. 26 to coincide with the

release of the football game NFL GameDay 2004. The online service will feature message boards, tournaments, downloadable rosters and player rankings, and will let users conduct voice chats with a PS2 headset.

It will also offer a unified login, so players can access the site with one username and password no matter which 989 Sports game they are playing.

Sony's new service is set to launch one day after rival Microsoft Corp. releases an upgrade to its Xbox Live online gaming platform that will let subscribers conduct voice chats without being in an actual game.

The Xbox Live service is a closed one; Microsoft collects subscription fees for it and operates all the game servers, regardless of the game or publisher. Sony's platform has traditionally been decentralized, with publishers operating online services and charging at their discretion.

Electronic Arts Inc., the independent publisher that dominates sports gaming, is putting all of its sports titles online on the PS2 this year, and has set up what it calls "EA Sports Nation" to link its games through common online features.

EA has refused thus far to support Xbox Live for its sports games, citing concerns about the business model. Microsoft has its own sports lineup, which it calls XSN Sports, that is also online-enabled and offers users access to message boards and player rankings.

ATI Wins Microsoft Deal for Next-Generation Xbox

ATI Technologies Inc. struck a blow against rival Nvidia Corp. on Thursday, winning a potentially lucrative deal to provide graphics technology for the next generation of Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox video game console.

ATI said the deal with the world's largest software maker will see it develop custom, leading-edge graphics technologies for use in future Xbox products and services. Graphics chips for the Xbox are currently provided by Nvidia.

"It does indicate that ATI is winning the graphics chip war. They do appear to have maintained a technology lead," said Desjardins Securities analyst Paul Howbold, who raised his target on ATI to $14.50 from $13.

"We looked at the next-generation Xbox product, just as we do other OEM opportunities," Nvidia spokesman Derek Perez told Reuters. "In order for us to engage, basically the economics have to make sense for both of us. In this case we were unable to reach an agreement."

The financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, but ATI officials said it will be structured as a royalty agreement, with ATI receiving funds to develop the product and receiving payments when shipments begin.

Analysts described the deal as a "major win" but cautioned the financial benefits are unlikely to kick in until late 2005, when the current game console cycle is expected to end.

ATI already produces chips for Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s GameCube under a royalty agreement, a relationship the company said will not be affected by the new deal.

"We've had a good strong long history with Nintendo and we don't expect any impact," Rick Bergman, ATI's senior vice-president of marketing told Reuters.

Speculation has run rampant among investors for months that ATI was well positioned to take the next Xbox contract away from Santa Clara, California-based Nvidia, particularly because of a recent arbitration dispute.

"It was really ATI's business to lose," Pacific Crest Securities analyst Michael McConnell told Reuters. "There's been a lot of speculation that (Nvidia) just weren't, frankly, that interested in pursuing the business.

Last summer, Nvidia had to take a charge to dispose of excess inventory of Xbox chips after Microsoft ordered a redesign to deal with security flaws.

The two sides also had a high-profile dispute that went to arbitration before being settled over the price Microsoft paid for the chips and the volume in which they were produced. Nvidia warned at one point that if it lost the arbitration it could be forced to produce the chips at a loss.

At the time of the settlement, Nvidia and Microsoft said they planned to work together on next-generation products.

"They've been back and forth I'm sure for over a year," Wedbush Morgan Securities analyst David Wu said. "My guess is, in the final analysis, Nvidia and Microsoft did not have such a good taste in their mouths after the arbitration thing."

Wu said the loss of the Xbox contract would leave Nvidia scrambling to find another video game partner by 2005.

"Whether they can get Sony or not, that's up to debate," he said, referring to the next generation of Sony Corp.'s dominant PlayStation console.

Microsoft Buys Some 3DO 'High Heat' Rights

Microsoft Corp. said on Friday it acquired the rights to baseball video game "High Heat" from bankrupt publisher 3DO Co., though an attorney for Major League Baseball said Microsoft still needed to pay for a license from the league and its players.

In fact, that new license might be necessary even if Microsoft keeps its already-licensed baseball game, "Inside Pitch," the attorney said.

Nancy Geenen, a managing partner at the law firm of Foley & Lardner and the attorney for Major League Baseball Properties, said Microsoft had acquired only the rights to the "engine," or the basic nuts and bolts of the game.

"Although Microsoft has the game engine that makes up the graphics and all the cool stuff 'High Heat' can do, it does not have a right to use Major League Baseball trademarks (or) likenesses," Geenen told Reuters.

Geenen said that even if Microsoft has the appropriate licenses for "Inside Pitch," it would still need new licenses if it rebuilt "Pitch" using the "High Heat" engine or if it scrapped "Pitch" entirely in favor of

continuing "High Heat" as-is.

A Microsoft spokesman was not immediately available to comment on the issue.

Game critics have long considered "High Heat" as the best baseball title in a crowded field.

3DO's assets were sold at a bankruptcy auction in San Francisco on Thursday. 3DO filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on May 28 and said it would try to sell its assets.

Microsoft did not immediately disclose the purchase price.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

RIAA Suffers a Setback in Piracy Battle

The U.S. recording industry received a setback in its nationwide campaign to quash music piracy on the Internet Friday when a federal judge ruled that two universities did not have to comply with subpoenas requesting that they hand over the identities of students who could be illegally sharing music online.

Both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston College won their requests to reject subpoenas issued by the Recording Industry Association of America over jurisdictional issues, according the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

The universities argued that the subpoenas, which were filed in Washington D.C., did not apply to them in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Tauro's ruling in the universities' favor could prove an obstacle for the RIAA's piracy offensive, given that the group has reportedly filed some 2,000 subpoenas through the Washington D.C. court, according to the EFF.

The ruling could mean that the group will have to file subpoenas in courts across the country where it believes infringement is occurring, a much longer and more complicated process, the EFF said.

EFF Staff Attorney Wendy Seltzer cheered the decision Friday, saying in a release that the ruling "confirms that due process applies to Internet user privacy nationwide." The EFF has been battling the RIAA campaign, saying that the group's efforts compromise the privacy of individual users.

The San Francisco-based privacy group isn't alone in its rejection of the RIAA's latest campaign. Pacific Bell Internet Services, a subsidiary of SBC Communications, has filed a suit in California alleging that the RIAA's

subpoenas are a threat to subscribers' privacy and a burden on ISPs.

What's more, Senator Norm Coleman (R-Minnesota) has also publicly spoken out against the group, calling the subpoenas a "shotgun" approach to piracy.

The RIAA's spraying of administrative subpoenas is just the latest strategy in a battle against Internet piracy that stems from the early days of Napster. And while the group's efforts to go after individual users have sparked some controversy and backlash, its campaign against piracy on the legal front has been mostly successful.

The group managed to knock Napster offline last year and has since won rulings in cases against Madster - formerly called Aimster - and other peer-to-peer file trading networks.

Having had success in cases against p-to-p networks, the industry has now focused on going after individual users with the aid of ISPs. Although Friday's ruling could slow down the subpoena process, that does not mean that ISPs won't eventually be ordered to comply.

Verizon Internet Services, for instance, lost its bid in June to protect the names of customers accused of illegal file trading.

The recording industry is using as its defense part of the 1998 U.S. Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which allows copyright holders to subpoena ISPs for the names of people they believe are using their copyrighted material without permission.

The EFF is campaigning for ISPs to notify users when their information is being sought. The group has also created an online database where users can check to see if their identifies have been subpoenaed by the RIAA. The database is at EFF.org.

Web Worm Hits Windows, Crashes Computers Worldwide

An Internet worm that attacks Windows operating systems spread across the globe on Tuesday, infecting and crashing home and office computers faster than technicians could install safeguards.

And a computer systems engineer says the worm, which specifically targets computers running Windows XP and Windows 2000, could spread for another couple of days before tapering off.

At least 124,000 computers using Microsoft Corp.'s ubiquitous Windows software have been infected worldwide, according to a sample by Symantec Corp.'s Security Response sensor network.

"Corporate networks are getting hit pretty hard," said Alfred Huger, a senior director of engineering at Symantec. "Hundreds of machines are spontaneously rebooting throughout the environment."

Computers already infected by the worm, known as "Blaster," scan the Internet looking for other machines running Windows that have an open security hole - one that has not been "patched" or given a fix from Microsoft. The worm then sends itself to those computers.

Symantec said Windows 2000 and XP computers in North America are getting scanned or infected after being connected to the Internet for an average of 25 minutes.

Symantec's Huger said that although corporate networks have been slowed by the worm, there has so far been no impact on Internet traffic overall.

The worm, also known as MSBlaster or LoveSan, surfaced on Monday in the U.S. and quickly spread around the world, taking advantage of a security hole discovered last month in Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows NT, and Windows Server 2003 operating systems.

Patches for the hole, except for Windows NT 4.0, for which the company no longer offers support, were put online by Microsoft.

Microsoft said the worm crashes some systems and infects others, but otherwise does no damage.

"It's certainly not a good thing," Microsoft spokesman Sean Sundwall said. But, "it has not spread at the speed with which more notorious worms, such as Slammer and I Love You and Code Red, did."

Symantec's Huger said the worm was poorly written, and that new variations of it could be more virulent.

Blaster is programmed to instruct an infected computer to attack a specific Microsoft security Web site on Aug. 16, and it carries a message for Microsoft's chairman: "Billy Gates why do you make this possible? Stop making money and fix your software!!"

Huger said he expected the worm would continue spreading over the next day or two before tapering off. The patch is available at http://www.microsoft.com/security/.

Because Blaster does not spread through e-mail like worms typically do, most anti-virus software will not block it. However, anti-virus applications will let computer owners know if they have been infected and can help clean up the worm.

A host of European and Asian anti-virus firms reported corporations had contacted them to say they had been infected as their systems went online. Following a patch, many were back up and running.

Some government agencies in the U.S. reported widespread systems problems. The state of Maryland closed 23 Motor Vehicle Administration offices at mid-day and the system was shut down to apply patches, said spokesman Jack Cahalan.

The computer network at Philadelphia's City Hall was also hit by the worm, according to a city official.

Last month, Microsoft warned of the hole in its Windows system, and security experts said it was only a matter of time before a worm appeared to exploit the vulnerability.

Microsoft Braces for Worm Onslaught

Microsoft Corp. is racing to outsmart an Internet worm that is designed to hijack computers worldwide and use them to attack the company's security Web site.

More than 300,000 computers running recent versions of the Windows operating system have been infected with the so-called Blaster worm since Monday, according to estimates from several security experts.

Infected machines are programmed to unleash a barrage of Internet data at the http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com Web site, the company's primary tool for disseminating software updates and security patches to its users.

The attack is expected to begin on Saturday, Aug. 16, at midnight on the East Coast. Infected computers in East Asia and the western Pacific region could launch the attack on Microsoft's site hours earlier.

The FBI's cyber division is trying to identify the source and author of the worm, said spokesman Bill Murray. Officials from the Department of Homeland Security are participating in the inquiry. Murray declined to say whether the FBI had any leads.

In an advisory released today, the Department of Homeland Security said the origins of the worm, which began spreading Monday afternoon, remain unknown.

Other than seeking to hijack computers for an attack on the Microsoft security site, the Blaster worm, also known as the "LoveSan" worm, appears to do little damage. Many infected PCs crash repeatedly, but data and programs stored on the machines are not lost.

A Microsoft spokesman said the company is preparing several lines of defense against the expected attack on its security site. The spokesman would not discuss any specific steps the company was taking beyond saying that it increased the amount of Internet bandwidth available for the Microsoft update site to ensure the site can handle more user downloads.

"We have added a tremendous amount of capacity and resources to that site, and while I can't say the traffic has decreased, the capacity there has," spokesman Sean Sundwall said.

Part of that increased capacity was put in place to handle the massive influx of users who stormed the update sites earlier this week to download the patch to protect themselves from the worm. The patch has been downloaded more than 80 million times since Microsoft released the fix July 16, with roughly half of those downloads occurring in the past week alone.

Security experts say Microsoft likely will seize upon telltale weaknesses in the worm to minimize its impact. The most obvious step Microsoft could take would be to redirect traffic generated by legitimate Windows Update visitors to an alternate Web site. Microsoft is letting users know that they can find the same software fixes at www.microsoft.com/downloads.

Any attack on Microsoft's security site may be smaller than originally anticipated because of the very way the Blaster worm is designed, security experts recently discovered. Only computers that are newly infected with the worm after 12:00 a.m. Saturday will seek to attack the Windows update site; the rest will simply continue scanning the Internet for other vulnerable computers, according to Symantec Security Response, a Cupertino Calif.-based Internet security company. Systems infected with the worm

prior to that time will only attack the site if they have been manually restarted by the user, according to Symantec.

Other methods for blocking the worm involve the cooperation of the nation's largest Internet service providers (ISPs), which Microsoft has been trying to secure.

ISPs can block Internet traffic generated by the Blaster worm. According to experts who have analyzed Blaster's code, infected computers will "spoof," or fake, the second half of their Internet address while attacking the Microsoft security site. With the proper filters in place, ISPs can get rid of all Internet traffic on their networks that appears to come from those phony addresses.

Oliver Friedrichs, senior manager with Symantec Security Response, said ISPs will likely do everything they can to mitigate the effects of the worm, since ISPs with large numbers of infected users could create serious bottlenecks that prevent their users from accessing the rest of the Web.

"It's difficult to say whether Microsoft will dodge this attack, but it's probably safe to say that many Internet users will observe sluggishness when trying to access the Internet" on Saturday, Friedrichs said.

Home users were believed to be most affected, but on Tuesday the "Blaster" worm reached into a dozen computers in the U.S. Senate and caused the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to shut down most of its computer system. The worm interrupted work for two days at CBS in New York.

Alfred Huger, senior director of engineering at Symantec Corp., a security software company, said the number of new infections has dropped nearly 30 percent since the worm's peak Tuesday morning, but that new, more invasive versions of the worm will probably emerge. But the security firm is still seeing several thousand new infections per hour today, he said.

Computer security experts said the worm was badly written, limiting its ability to spread as quickly or extensively as it could have. But the clear sense among the experts was that the online world once again dodged a bullet.

"A better version of this worm wouldn't crash any machines; it would work correctly every time, move faster, and delete or steal its victims' files," said Dan Ingevaldson, an engineering manager at Atlanta-based Internet Security Systems Inc.

The worm cost businesses as much as $329 million worldwide in lost productivity on Tuesday, according to RedSiren Inc., an Internet security company based in Pittsburgh. Red Siren based its assumption on 2 million computers being infected worldwide, far more than the hundreds of thousands of infections estimated by other security experts.

Court Urged to Reinstate Online Porn Law

The Bush administration has appealed to the Supreme Court to reinstate a law that punishes Web site operators who expose children to dirty pictures and other inappropriate material.

The court has already sided with the government once this year in its war

against online smut, ruling that Congress can require public libraries that receive federal funding to equip computers with anti-pornography filters.

In an appeal filed Monday, Solicitor General Theodore Olson said the filter technology alone is not enough. Children are "unprotected from the harmful effects of the enormous amount of pornography on the World Wide Web," he told justices.

The broader law at issue now requires that operators of commercial Internet sites use credit cards or some form of adults-only screening system to ensure children cannot see material deemed harmful to them. Operators could face fines and jail time for not complying.

Critics contend the law violates the rights of adults to see or buy what they want on the Internet.

Olson said the main target was commercial pornographers who use sexually explicit "teasers" to lure customers.

A Philadelphia-based appeals court has twice ruled that the 1998 law, known as the Child Online Protection Act, unconstitutionally restricts speech. The law has been on hold since it was challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of artists, book stores and others who put information on the Web.

The Supreme Court has reviewed the law once. The justices were splintered in a 2002 ruling that sent the case back to the court in Philadelphia for more consideration of the First Amendment implications.

Jonathan Zittrain, a Harvard Law School professor who specializes in Internet law, said Tuesday that the high court will likely struggle again with what to do. "From the government’s view, it can’t hurt to appeal because it’s essentially a roulette wheel," he said.

Zittrain predicted that the government will have a tougher time than it did persuading the high court to uphold the library filter law. The government argued in its filing that the cases are similar.

ACLU associate legal director Ann Beeson said the laws are very different because the 1998 statute involves criminal penalties for people who exercise free speech rights.

"I would have thought the Justice Department would have better things to do with its time than to defend what is clearly an unconstitutional law," she said.

The case is Ashcroft v. ACLU, 03-218.

AOL Asking Time Warner to Drop ’AOL’ Name

America Online is asking AOL Time Warner Inc. to drop "AOL" from its name, concerned that negative publicity about the parent company is hurting the online service’s efforts to right itself.

Jonathan Miller, chief executive of America Online, told his staff in an e-mail Monday that "AOL" the online service was becoming confused with "AOL" as shorthand for the world’s largest media company.

"I believe it’s time for us to get our brand back," Miller said in his note. "Any controversy or criticism involving the corporate entity has actually hit our consumer brand."

Executives from the Time Warner side of the company have been agitating for just such a change for months, but Miller stressed in his note that it was his idea to propose to AOL Time Warner chief executive Richard Parsons that AOL be dropped from the corporate name.

Mia Carbonell, a spokeswoman for AOL Time Warner, said Parsons and other senior managers were considering Miller’s proposal but that the final decision would be up to the company’s board. She declined to say whether the issue would be on the agenda at the board’s meeting in September.

The story was first reported by The Wall Street Journal on its Web site.

AOL Time Warner’s name has been tarnished as the Securities and Exchange Commission investigates numerous accounting issues at the company, mainly at the AOL division. The company has also been hit with numerous shareholder lawsuits that accuse AOL Time Warner of misleading investors.

America Online has been struggling to turn itself around as dial-up subscribers continue to abandon the service for faster ways to connect to the Internet. Revenues and earnings at AOL are falling, and subscriber losses have increased faster than many analysts were expecting.

If the AOL name is dropped, it would represent the latest retreat from the lofty goals of the deal announced in January 2000 under which AOL agreed to purchase Time Warner.

Since then, several senior managers from the AOL side of the company have left or lost power, and veterans from Time Warner including Parsons are firmly in control. The company has also abandoned promises of rapid growth and "convergence" among different corporate divisions.

Iomega Readies Removable Hard Drives

Iomega is developing a way for computer users to take their hard disks on the road.

On Tuesday, the San Diego storage company, best known for its Zip and Jaz drives, will announce plans to begin shipping a new type of storage technology called the Removable Rigid Disk system. RRDs will be based on commodity hard drive components but will feature a special drive cartridge that can be used to insert the disk in a special drive and remove it. The disks are expected to have a capacity of 35GB.

Hard disks typically are not removed from their storage cases because they are extremely sensitive to contamination, but Iomega has developed a number of disk cleaning and dust-prevention technologies that allow the 2.5-inch disks to be moved from a special RRD hard drive to the RRD cartridge without being corrupted.

"What we’re doing here is using off-the-shelf hard disk drive technology... but we’re putting it together in a unique way that allows the cartridge to be pulled out and sealed," said Iomega Product Manager Bob Lutz.

Iomega has developed an air lock, an air filtration system, and an automatic head cleaning mechanism to help prevent data corruption. The company has also developed a special error correction mechanism that can be used in addition to the standard error correction that is already performed on hard drives.

The RRD system will ship with an enhanced version of Iomega's Backup software that will be able to perform data compression and encryption. The software will also be able to copy system images on to the RRD drive, which will allow users to back up the entire operating system and not just individual files.

"If your hard drive crashes, you can reboot your system from the drive," Lutz said.

Iomega will begin shipping a Windows client version of the RRD in the first quarter of 2004 and will begin selling a server version for Windows and Linux two months later, Lutz said. An external version of the product that will connect to any Windows computer with a USB 2.0 connection will be available in retail stores. Iomega expects a variety of computer makers to ship an internally installed RRD system as well, the company said.

The product will be available through retail and OEM vendors, he said.

The pricing and brand name of the RRD drives will be announced some time around the Comdex trade show in November, Lutz said. A RRD system with software will cost between $350 and $500, he predicted.

Microsoft Updates Office For Mac

Microsoft on Tuesday released two new versions of its Office for the Mac, dropped the price of the Standard Edition by $100, and added virtual machine software to the new top-end edition.

New to the Office lineup for the Mac are Office v.X Professional and Office v.X Student and Teacher Edition.

The former adds Virtual PC for Mac, a x86 software emulator that, when configured with Windows XP Professional, can run PC programs on the Mac. Virtual PC comes from Connectix, the virtual machine software firm which Microsoft purchased earlier this year. Professional is priced at $499.

Student and Teacher Edition, although identical to the Standard Edition of the suite, is priced at $149, substantially less than the still-available Standard, which now costs $399, down from $499.

As with the Office aimed at educators and students who use Windows, the Mac version doesn't demand proof that the buyer is, in fact, either in school or teaching. It may be installed on up to three Macs, said Microsoft.

The new versions will be available August 18 in the United States and Sept. 1 worldwide.

Help With Blaster Worm

I’m certain you have heard about the many thousands of PCs around the world that were infected by the Blaster Worm. This worm does not come through email as most viruses do. Instead, PCs are attacked through a software hole in Windows. You will never see the attack until it is too late and your PC has been affected.

Below, are the steps you should take on your home PC to remove the MSBlaster Worm and install the software patch that will fix this software hole. Further, there are recommendations of steps you can take to protect your PC against future attacks.

MICROSOFT NEWSLETTER:

In This Newsletter:
--Who Is Vulnerable
--4 Steps for Home Users

At 11:34 A.M. Pacific Time on August 11, Microsoft began investigating a worm reported by Microsoft Product Support Services (PSS). A new worm commonly known as W32.Blaster.Worm has been identified that exploits the vulnerability that was addressed by Microsoft Security Bulletin MS03-026.

Who Is Vulnerable?

Users of the following products are vulnerable to infection by this worm:

. Microsoft Windows NT 4.0
. Microsoft Windows 2000
. Microsoft Windows XP
. Microsoft Windows Server 2003

Your computer is not vulnerable to the Blaster worm if either of these conditions apply to you:

. If you are using Microsoft Windows 95; Windows 98; Windows 98 Second Edition (SE); or Windows Millennium (Me).
. If you downloaded and installed security update MS03-026 prior to August 11, the date the worm was discovered.

4 Steps for Home Users

If you are using Windows NT 4.0, Windows 2000, Windows XP, or Windows Server 2003, you should follow the steps in this sequence to help protect your system and to recover if your system has been infected.

1. Enable a Firewall: Make sure you have a firewall activated to help protect your computer against infection before you take other steps. If your computer has been infected, activating firewall software will help limit the effects of the worm on your computer.

The latest Windows operating systems have a firewall built

in. Windows XP and Windows Server 2003 users should print or save the following instructions for how to enable their firewall.

If your computer is rebooting repeatedly, disconnect from the Internet before you enable your firewall. To disconnect your computer from the Internet:

. Broadband connection users: Locate the cable that runs from your external DSL or cable modem to the wall and unplug that cable either from the modem or from the telephone jack.
. Dial-up connection users: Locate the telephone cable that runs from the modem inside your computer to your telephone jack and unplug that cable either from the telephone jack or from your computer.

Follow the instructions provided for your operating system, and then reconnect to the Internet.
. Windows XP Professional users: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1044
. Windows XP Home Edition users: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1045
. Windows Server 2003 users: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1046
. Windows NT 4.0 and Windows 2000 users: You will need to install a third-party firewall. Most firewall software for home users is available in free or trial versions. If you are unable to download a firewall product, please check with your local computer retailer. Check the following resources for more information on personal firewalls:
-- ZoneAlarm Pro (Zone Labs): http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1047
-- Tiny Personal Firewall (Tiny Software): http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1048
-- Outpost Firewall (Agnitum): http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1049
-- Kerio Personal Firewall (Kerio Technologies): http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1050
-- BlackICE PC Protection (Internet Security Systems): http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1051

Windows 2000 users: Alternatively, you can take steps to block the affected ports so that your computer can be patched. Here are some modified instructions from the TechNet article HOW TO: Configure TCP/IP Filtering in Windows 2000: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1052.

2. Update Windows: If you are disconnected from the Internet, remember to reconnect before you take the next steps. Download and install the security update addressed in Security Bulletin MS03-026 for the version of Windows that you are using from the Microsoft Download Center.
-- Windows NT Server 4.0 and Windows NT Workstation 4.0: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1053

-- Windows NT Server 4.0, Terminal Server Edition: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1054

-- Windows 2000: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1055

-- Windows XP: The vast majority of Windows XP customers use this version. If you are unsure, it is likely that you are using this version.
http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1056

-- Windows XP (64 bit): The 64-bit version of Windows XP requires special hardware to run. If you are unsure, it is likely that you are not running this version of Windows XP.
http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1057

-- Windows Server 2003:
http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1058

-- Windows Server 2003 (64 bit):
http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1059

3. Use Antivirus Software: Make sure you have the latest updates installed.

. If you already have antivirus software installed, go to your antivirus vendor's Web site to get the latest updates, also known as virus definitions.

. If you do not have antivirus software installed, get it. If you are unable to download antivirus software, please check with your local computer retailer. The following vendors participating in the Microsoft Virus Information Alliance (VIA) offer antivirus products for home users:

. Network Associates: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1060
. Trend Micro: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1061
. Symantec: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1062
. Computer Associates : http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1063

Learn about Microsoft's Virus Information Alliance:
http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1064.

4. Remove the Worm: If you think there is even the slightest possibility that your computer might be infected, use the worm removal tool available at your antivirus vendor's Web site. For additional details on this worm from antivirus software vendors participating in the Microsoft Virus Information Alliance (VIA) please visit the following links:

-- Network Associates: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1065
-- Trend Micro: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1066
-- Symantec: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1067
-- Computer Associates: http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid"1068

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